

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

STOCKHOLM 364

AMEMBASSY OSLO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1622

E. O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: FRAGA SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO SPANISH PUBLIC ON REFORMS

REFS: MADRID 1381

1. UNDER QUESTIONING FROM A PANEL OF NEWSMEN ON TELEVISION.

27 FEB, VICE PRESIDENT FOR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND INTERIOR

MINISTER FRAGA SPOKE DIRECTLY TO THE SPANISH PUBLIC ON REFORM

PROPOSALS WHICH HE HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED MOSTLY IN INTER-

VIEWS WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS.

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2. HIS MAIN THRUST WAS THE IMPORTANCE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE PAST EXTREME IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES EXHIBITED IN SPANISH HISTORY, OF STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL CENTER, OF "SEARCHING FOR FORMULAS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COEXISTENCE AND EFFECTIVE FORMULAS OF POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN THE AREAS OF MODERATION AGAINST THE EXTREMES". TODAY'S MODERNIZED SPANISH SOCIETY "WOULD NOT NOW PERMIT EXTREME SOLUTIONS", SPANIARDS NO LONGER THINK AS THEY DID IN 1931. THE PROGRAM OUTLINED IN PRIME MINISTER ARIAS 28 JAN SPEECH TO THE "CORTES" WAS DESIGNED TO PRODUCE EXACTLY THIS SORT OF MODERATE PROGRESS.

3. HE SAID THAT A NEW ELECTROL LAW WAS BEING PREPARED AND THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORED ON AKIN TO THE BRITISH TYPE, WHICH FAVORED THE FORMATION OF MAJORITIES OVER ONE BASED ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (SUGGESTING A SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICT RATHER THAN THE FRENCH OR WEST GERMAN SYSTEMS USUALLY TALKED ABOUT HERE. HE ARGUED FOR A BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE WHICH WOULD PERMIT GREATER STUDY OF PENDING BILLS. ALL THESE CHANGES WOULD BE READY FOR A GENERAL IN THE SPRING OF 1977, HE SAID. A REFORM OF THE LAW ON ASSOCIATIONS WAS ALSO BEING PREPARED. ANY POLITICAL GROUP WHICH PLEDGES "ALLEGIANCE " TO THE CONSTITUTION WILL HAVE ITS PLACE IN SPANISH POLITICAL LIFE. HE DID NOT FEEL THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY COULD DO SO.

4. SPEAKING ON PERHAPS THE ITEM OF MOST INTEREST IN THE LAST WEEK, HE SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE UNIVERSITIES HAD BEEN DEEPLY INFILTRATED BY IDEOLOGICAL GROUPS, SOME OF WHICH HAD DETERMINED TO MAKE THEM THEIR FIELDS OF ACTION. BUT IT WAS NOT TRUE THAT THEY HAD BECOME MARXIST "BUNKERS". NOR WAS IT POSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM WITH HASTY DECISIONS. IT WAS MORE A QUESTION OF EDUCATION THAN OF POLICE ACTION. "BUT I CAN SAY THAT FOR ME NEITHER THIS THEME NOR ANY THEME IS GOING TO MAKE ME NERVOUS, BUT SHOULD THE MOMENT ARRIVE SOME PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE MADE NERVOUS IF THEY CONTINUE TO ABUSE THIS SUBJECT.

5. THE GIVT INTENDED TO CONTINUE INCREASING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE PUBLIC FREEDOM. HE RULED OUT, HOWEVER, AN "AMNESTY". AT PRESENT THERE WERE LESS THAN 500 PEISONERS IN SPANISH JAILS
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FOR CRIMES CONNECTED WITH PUBLIC ORDER. OF THESE HALF WERE TERRORISTS.

6. A SOURCE WITH CONNCETIONS TO BOTH FRAGA AND ARIAS SAYS THE WORK MOVES ON, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED IN THE MIXED COMMISSION. TENTATIVELY, THEY THINK OF A CORPORATE UPPER HOUSE AND A DOMINANT LOWER HOUSE ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE BUT WITH A CORPORATE FLAVOR (I.E. 300 MEMBERS ELECTED BY CITIZENRY AT

LARGE, 100 ELECTED FROM SYNDICATES AND 100 BY MUNICIPALITIES).
WE NOTE IN THE PCE, WITH A STRONGHOLD IN LABOR, MIGHT DO RATHER
WELL IN THE SYNDICAL SECTOR, SIMPLY BY RUNNING UNDECLARDE PCE
MEMBERS AS WORKERS CANDIDATES.

7. FRAGA'S DENINCIATION FO THE ACCUSATIONS THAT THE UNIVERSITIES
HAVE BECOME A "MARXIST BUNKER". CLEARLY CRITICIZES A RIGHT
WING CORTES DEPUTY WHO USED THESE WORDS TWO WEEKS AGO (REFTELL IT
AGAIN IDENTIFIES FRAGA WITH THE CENTER.
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